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ABSTRACT

This curriculum unit on textiles is intended for middle school students who have previously studied the cultures of modern and ancient Latin America. The unit does not employ Spanish language skills. Its lessons apply to individual, small group, and whole group work, and may take from 30 minutes to three class periods. The guide lists necessary sources, including student readings, ancient and current textile visuals and texts, maps, and videos. The unit contains eight lessons: (1) "Who Are the Maya and Where Are They Today?" (2) "What Does Your Clothing Mean?" (3) "The Geography of Huipiles"; (4) "Nation-States vs. Ethnic/Cultural Groups--Mapping Guatemala and Southeast Mexico"; (5) "The Symbols on a Huipil"; (6) "Creating a Huipil"; (7) "Video: Central America Close Up, Guatemala and El Salvador"; and (8) "Create a Drama Exploring the Clash between Traditions and Modernity." Each lesson outlines goals, procedures, and materials needed. (Contains illustrations of Mayan textiles.) (BT)

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Schlichting, Kimberly

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Textiles as a Reflection of Ancient and Contemporary Maya Cultures

An Interdisciplinary Unit for 6th and 7th Grade Students at
John F. Kennedy Middle School,
Northampton, MA

Created by:
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Thanks to the **Massachusetts Foreign Language Association** for materials support and the **Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program** which allowed me to experience the textiles first-hand and accumulate teaching materials and ideas.

If you are interested in participating in one of the summer programs for educators offered by the *Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program* contact:

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Introduction

I have created this interdisciplinary unit for the sixth and seventh grade students at my middle school. I will be team teaching this unit on textiles, and it will begin after the students have already had significant exposure to modern Latin America and its ancient cultures. You may find that your students require more background work than I've included here.

As some sixth graders at JFK will not have had any Spanish when they encounter this unit, I have created it without involving Spanish language skills. However, there are several beginner language topics you could easily incorporate, including colors, animals, describing people and clothing, or make more content-based connections to topography and geography.

Lessons are sequenced intentionally, but have no time associated with them. Depending on your students and your goals, the lessons may take 30 minutes or three periods for each. I also imagine that you will devise ways of arranging the lessons that best suit your students. Some activities may be better geared for individual or small group work, while others lend themselves more to whole group work.

Although the unit does not explicitly refer to ACTFL's National Standards, the textiles are a perfect example of "the three P's"- Product, Process and Perspective- used in the Culture and Comparisons Standard.

Finally, two important terms that you will need to know: **MSW** = Mayan Speaking World; and a **"huipil"** is the traditional blouse created and worn by Mayan women and is particular to individual communities.

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Sources and Necessary Materials for the Unit:

Student Readings:

"The Corn Grows Ripe". Dorothy Rhoads. Puffin Books, New York City, NY, 1956 & 1953.

"Abuela's Weave". Omar S. Castañeda. Lee and Low Books, Inc., New York City, 1993.

"Among the Volcanoes". Omar S. Castañeda. Lodestar Books, New York City, 1991.

"Dress Blues-Students say the face pressure over clothes". Michael Scherer. Spring, 2000. Daily Hampshire Gazette, Northampton, MA.

Ancient Textile Representations and Examples of Textile Patterns excerpted from:

"The Maya Textile Tradition". Margot Blum Schevill. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York City, 1997. (If you were to invest in one book with fantastic pictures and information, this is it!)

"Mayan Clothing and Weaving Through the Ages". Linda Asturias de Barrios, Dina Fernández García, Eds., Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena, Guatemala City, Guatemala, 1999.

"Living Maya". Walter F. Morris, Junior. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York City, 1987.

Lecture Handouts from Barbara de Arathoon, Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena, Guatemala City, Guatemala, July 1, 2000.

"Rukemb'al Ixmukane' ". Agustina Mactul de Sipac. Universidad Rafael Landívar Instituto Linguística/ PRODIPMA, Guatemala City, 1993.

"Diseños Mayas Libro para Colorear". Wilson G. Turner, Dover Coloring Book, Guatemala City/New York City, 1980.

"Un poco de Todo sobre el Tejido Maya". Fabiana Flores de Saénz. , Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena, Guatemala City, Guatemala, 1999.

"Contenidos culturales mayas estdudio de la naturaleza. Estudios Sociales - tercer grado". PRONEBI, México, D.F. 1991.

"Life in Ancient Mexico Coloring Book". John Green, Dover Coloring Book, New York City, 1991.

"Mexican Indian Folk Designs". Irmgard Weitlaner-Johnson, Dover Pictorial Archive Series, Graz, Austria, 1993.

Current Textile Visuals:
"Guatemala Rainbow". Gianni Vecchiato. Pomegranate Artbooks, San Francisco. 30 Postcard photographs showing textiles worn in daily life and labeled by town, only $9.95.

Current Textile Visuals and Texts:
"The Maya Textile Tradition". Margot Blum Schevill. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York City, 1997. (If you were to invest in one book with fantastic pictures and information, this is it!)

"Mayan Clothing and Weaving Through the Ages". Linda Asturias de Barrios, Dina Fernández García, Eds., Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena, Guatemala City, Guatemala, 1999.

"Living Maya". Walter F. Morris, Junior. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York City, 1987.

"Weaving Identities, Construction of Dress and Self in a Highland Guatemalan Town". Carol Hendrickson. University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas, 1995.

Maps Needed:
Detailed map of Guatemala
Area map of Mexico and Guatemala
Relief map of Guatemala

Videos
"Central America Close Up, Guatemala and El Salvador". Maryknoll World Productions, 1-800-227-8523. Also available from "Teacher's Discovery", 1-800-teacher.

" Mayan Clothing of Guatemala". 1994. Produced by Samuel Franco Arce and the Museo Ixchel del Traje Indígena. Museo Ixchel, Guatemala City. fax 011-502-231-3739.

Lesson Title: **Who are the Maya and where are they today?**
(Activating previous knowledge)

Goal:
Activate already known information about the Ancient Maya. Create interest and curiosity about the group(s) today.

Procedure:
Small groups of students collect as much factual information as they remember about the Ancient Maya on paper. Put up info on the board and students will take notes to consolidate their memories.

Students individually answer the following questions from board/overhead/worksheet. **(Handout #1)** What happened to the people who built the temples and pyramids? Are they still alive? Do the Mayans exist as a group now? If they do, how would you recognize them? Where would you find them?

Discuss the ideas kids had on their worksheet and then for a more concrete answer show them slides or picture books.

Materials:
-worksheet/overhead with questions described above

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Lesson Title: **What does your clothing mean?**

Goal:
Compare and contrast students' views of the meaning (or lack thereof) of clothing in their milieu to the role of clothing as a reflection of culture, religion and social cohesion in the Maya Speaking World.

Procedure:
Establish that clothing in the American Context does not necessarily represent anything known. For instance, show an "aeropostal" shirt or a T-shirt with an "oriental" design, word or theme (both popular in 1999-2000). Ask students if they understand what they mean and from what country/culture they hail. Most assuredly the answer will be "No". Does it matter? Why do people wear this?

Optional discussion of what student's clothing says about who they are, if anything. (membership to a group, financial statement, believing ideals expressed in logos and sayings on T-shirts, etc.)

Optional reading/discussion of newspaper article "Dress Blues-Students say the face pressure over clothes" about Middle School Students and fashion choices. (**Handout #2**)

To establish that in the Maya Speaking World, clothing is seen as a statement of beliefs, relate the story of Arthur Demarest (pictured on front cover NY Times, Sept. 18, 2000, also in US News and World Report during same month). Arthur is a renowned archaeologist working in Guatemala on Mayan sites. On one of his new digs, the local indigenous kept trying to run him out of town. He was finally summoned by the powers that be (the group Shaman or religious leader). The first thing the Shaman wanted to know about was Arthur's shirt. (SLIDE) It was an old US Air Force shirt with a picture of a fighter plane and bombs falling. The Mayans believe that what you have on your clothing represents you and your beliefs. Because of this shirt, the indigenous believed that Arthur was responsible for the dogfights and nightraids to stop drug running.

Compare the MSW's emphasis placed on the beliefs carried in clothing, versus how "we" may or may not see the message in clothing as important.

Brief introduction to the importance of meaning in Mayan huipiles (the highly decorated woven shirts worn by women). Show huipiles/slides/pictures from different towns and mention that the style of shirt not only establishes what language they speak (there are 22 Mayan languages in Guatemala and 9 more in Mexico) and what town the wearer is from, but the symbols also have religious and other important cultural meanings. Point out a few of these meanings, for instance the zigzag represents a serpent and a connection to the Underworld, a diamond represents the four colors of the cosmos, many animals and plants show an interdependence on the environment.

Optional: Volunteer will be allowed to put on a complete outfit from Chichicastenango, Guatemala.

Materials: see next page

Materials:
-Slide of Arthur Demarest in his "bomber" shirt
-Copies of NY Times, Sept. 18, 2000, or US News and World Report during same month
-Aeropostal and "far eastern" design T-shirts (may even be worn by student on that day)
-Book "Children of the Corn"
-Newspaper article "Dress Blues" about Mid. School Students and fashion choices
-Pictures/slides of various huipiles
-Complete outfit from Chichicastenango, Guatemala.

Lesson Title: **The Geography of huipiles**

Goal:
Students will understand that towns/communities create and wear their own style of dress, unique to their group. Students will practice recognizing some communities' "signature" styles and then predict where people are from based on their clothing.

Procedure:
Show several slides of huipiles grouped by villages. Ask if they think the first group of slides were from the same place as the second group, etc. Ask how they can recognize that.

Stopping on one slide, have students **briefly** either sketch or describe the huipil **(Handout #3)**. After 5 minutes on the first slide, students will point out what they noticed as distinguishing characteristics. They should then write the town the huipil is from and label the town on the map. Do several different towns. This exercise can be done in large group with slides, or in smaller groups over a course of days with picture books.

After collecting several examples from the above exercise, show students some pictures/slides of women in huipiles and have them predict what town they are from.

Materials:
Slides/pictures of several examples of huipiles from several different villages
Map of Guatemala with the towns
Colored pencils, depending on the level of depth desired in student sketches.
Worksheet to facilitate drawing and matching with towns

Lesson Title: **Nation-States vs. Ethnic/Cultural Groups - Mapping Guatemala and Southeast Mexico**

Prerequisite Knowledge:
-Different Mayan towns are recognizable by their clothing.
-Familiarity with the terminology "ethnic group", "nationality", nation-state
-Basic map skills

Goal:
Though different Maya towns have their own clothing designs, they are all recognizable as Maya.

Students will understand that Ethnic/cultural groups may extend beyond nation-state boundaries or may be limited to a portion of land within a nation-state boundary, and begin to explore the reasons why.

Procedure:
(Optional) With the goal of eliciting/establishing that different ethnic groups reside within one country (and that it can cause conflict), ask students what they know about the conflicts in Yugoslavia or the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

How do we recognize different ethnic groups? religion, language, clothing, customs (food source, diet), etc..

Compare maps of Mexico and Guatemala that show the nation-state boundaries and the ethnic groups. How many different groups are in each country? [24 ethnic/language groups in Guatemala (22 are Mayan), 56 in Mexico (9 are Mayan)]. There are 31 Maya language groups between the two countries (NOT DIALECTS, actual LANGUAGES!).

Show a map of the Maya groups in both countries. Is it a surprise that they are in both countries? Why is the group in two countries? Nation-states of Mexico and Guatemala formed long after the ethnic groups came into being- and 1821 respectively. There was no "border crossing" before then and people with their culture moved around.

Students will quickly shade in the Maya regions on their own copies of the maps (**Handout #4**).

{If questions arise about the Maya being considered as one group versus 31 ethnic groups, you can compare it to German Americans, Irish Americans, etc. all having a distinct identity but still being "American". And they refer to themselves by the name of their language and the word Maya following. (Cakchiquel Maya, Mam Maya, Yucatec Maya, Quiché Maya, etc.).}

Refering to topography map: Even though they are all identified as Maya, how did groups become separate? Brainstorm ideas together, answers can include language, the role of topography (settle around a water or food source, separated by rugged landscapes, etc.)
Materials: Next page

Materials:
Relief map of Guatemala. Pictures/slides of topography.
Nation-state maps of Mexico, Guatemala.
Ethnic maps of Mexico, Guatemala.
Pan-Maya map.
Student maps of MX and GT to shade in the Maya portions.

Lesson Title: **The symbols on a huipil (from ancient times to now)**

Goal:
Students will be able to recognize some of the symbols on the huipiles and understand what they represent. Students will see the connection of modern huipiles to ancient times.

Procedure:
-**Handout 5 and 6**: Students will make educated guesses on worksheet to match the symbol/picture to the description and then to the meaning. Discuss afterwards (answer key at end of this packet).
-**Handout 7**: Students will color in symbols, and label symbols they recognize.
-**Handout 8:** Students will identify what symbols they recognize in examples of some communities' huipiles.
-**Handout 9 or overhead**: Students will say (or be shown) which symbols they recognize on the lintels of Lady Xoc, from 708AD.

Materials:
-Picture/overhead with clothing from ancient times (Lady Xoc)
-Worksheets with modern symbols explained for coloring or redrawing

Lesson Title: **Creating a huipil**

Goal:
Students will understand the construction and designing of a complex huipil by making their own row with traditional symbols and then putting the rows together with other students to create a paper huipil.

Procedure:
-On a worksheet (**Handout #10**), students will each design their own stripe of a huipil and then write an explanation of the symbols/colors they have chosen.
-Students will then make two copies of their row on 2"x18" (approximately) stripes of white paper.
-Groups will combine the stripes to create a "paper huipil".

Materials:
-Worksheets with modern symbols explained (from previous lesson)
-Worksheet to illustrate their row and write the explanation of the parts
-Two or three 2"x18" (approximately) stripes of white paper per child

Lesson Title: **Video "Central America Close Up, Guatemala and El Salvador"**

Goal:
Students will see how huipiles are created and worn in everyday life. The video is a wonderful and sympathetic introduction to the daily life of a 14 year old Maya girl in Guatemala, and introduces larger questions.

Procedure:
See **Handout # 11** for a pre-video conversation topics and questions for students to answer.
Materials: Worksheet

Lesson Title: **Create a drama exploring the clash between tradition and modernity**

Goal:
Students will write a short drama about a character's dilemma based on one of the following: "The Corn Grows Ripe", "Among the Volcanoes", "Abuela's Weave", or, Nati in the video "Central America Close Up, Guatemala and El Salvador".

Procedure:
Students will choose a topic based on a character's problem created by the clash around them between tradition and modernity. Examples include deciding to wear a huipil or "ladino" clothing, to leave town to get an education, whether or not to have electricity, etc.
Materials: None.

Key to worksheets

Worksheet 5
First write the number of the picture next to the description. Then try to guess what the picture means and write that letter next to the description.

monkey _____ _____
hummingbird on tobacco plant _____ _____
snake _____ _____
dead turkey _____ ___
toad _____ _____
tiger _____ _____
two-headed eagle _____ _____

Worksheet 6
Write the numbe. of the picture next to the description.

the cosmos and four directions _____
cultivated earth ready for planting _____
snake, plants and cosmos _____
monkey _____
feathered serpeant (an important God) _____
father and mother with cornstalk arms _____
toads _____

Worksheet 7
I.Students may recognize the zig-zag snake or plants.
II. 1. Dog 2. Deer 3. Hummingbird
III. 1. Plants and birds 2. Cosmos 3. Snake zig-zag
4. two-headed eagle

I. Facts I remember about the Ancient Maya:

II. What do you think…..?

1. What happened to the people who built the temples and pyramids? Are they still alive? Do they exist as a group now?

2. If they are still alive, where would you find them?

3. If they are still alive, how would you recognize them?

Dress blues

Students say they face pressure over clothes

By MICHAEL SCHERER
Staff Writer

NORTHAMPTON — Wearing baggy pants or shorts, extra pockets, oversized logos, one tank top and a tropical shirt, Daniel Duffy's seventh grade advisory group talked the other day about staying stylish in the ever-changing world of adolescent fashion.

"I just don't think that my parents really know what the trend is today," said Evan Powers, three stripes and the word Adidas printed across his chest.

The other JFK Middle School students nodded in agreement.

"They always come up with the excuse that 'When I was your age I wore long pants and a collared shirt, or we wore uniforms,'" Evan said.

No parents were present to mount a defense, but perhaps none was needed. For while many of these students said they regularly argued with their folks about what clothes to buy and what to wear to school, the majority also said that fashion competition among their peers had gone too far.

"Sometimes at this school, I've noticed, some kids wear stuff and then other kids get excluded," observed Landen Rayton.

According to area principals, middle school fashion worries extend far beyond the walls of Duffy's advising classroom. Though there is nothing new about students defining themselves with a certain look, principals say they are increasingly surprised by the pitch of the competition and the extremes of the dress.

"It's the 'scrubs' and the 'jocks' and whatever," said Julie Salzman, principal of White Brook Middle School in Easthampton. Each group has its own trademarks, she said — a brand name, a certain size of pants or a noticeable accessory.

Salzman, like educators at most area schools, draws the line at gang colors and clothing deemed too revealing.

"What I find more than anything is girls coming to school with very short skirts and inappropriate tight clothing," Salzman said. Often that clothing has been acquired or worn without parental consent.

CAROL LOLLIS

Four JFK Middle School students in Northampton ascend a staircase at the school, on a day in which they and other students reflected on the peer pressures they face when it comes to fashion. From left, they are Grace King, 13, Amy Kuter, 13, David Waterman, 13, and Molly Haas-Hooven, 12. Below right, Alex Rodriguez, 12, and 13-year-old Sam Seewald, right, pose in a hall at the city's middle school.

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

What do you think about dress codes in school? Do school uniforms make sense?

Call GazetteLine, 584-3200, # 8003 and tell us what you think. Register your opinion in our poll on GazetteNET or join a discussion on Community Voice. Both are at www.gazettenet.com.

At JFK, Principal Richard Carnes said he is aware of students regularly changing their clothes when they get to school, away from their parents' critical gaze. One mother at JFK recently followed her daughter to class, said Carnes, caught her in a new outfit and made her change back into more fitting apparel.

"I think there probably has been an increase in attention to the fashions of the day," Carnes said. "That has always been there, but it becomes more noticeable as fashions become more pronounced, for lack of a better word."

Alerted to his students' struggles with style, Duffy polled their discontent several weeks ago. He asked his advising group to anonymously answer one question on a piece of paper.

Would you be OK with school uniforms? More than two thirds of the students wrote yes, he said.

When asked several days later for a show of hands, however, no one moved — at least not right away.

"It depends on what kind of uniform it was," Ezra Prior said, eventually, at the prodding of Duffy, who reminded the students of the survey.

Orion Russell spoke up too. Wearing a T-shirt printed with a picture of talk show host Jerry Springer over the caption "Satan," he said a uniform might be OK if the clothing was comfortable, like

■ See CLOTHES/Back of section

CAROL LOLLIS

■ Continued from Page 1

khakis and a long-sleeve shirt.

"No one would put anybody down because you would all be wearing the same thing," said Evan.

To this, Danielle Rodriguez added that she could handle a uniform if it came in nice colors, perhaps pastels for the girls.

Danielle grudgingly admitted that she had at times fallen victim to the pressures of middle school haute couture. The first moment she saw a shopping bag from the store Abercrombie and Fitch, for example, she said she knew she had to shop there.

"I saw this really cute guy on the bag," Danielle said.

When her mother recently gave her a gift certificate to The Gap for her birthday, Danielle said she ripped it up. She wanted clothes from Abercrombie instead. In hindsight, she said she was embarrassed by what she had done.

A handful of Duffy's students admitted to hiding school outfits from their parents, by wearing shorts under long pants for example. They said shorts are just more comfortable. For Carnes, these tactics raise issues of student health. The middle school age group has a tendency to wear less clothing than the weather permits, he said.

For many students, the outside temperature is less important than style.

And style comes at a price. Many of the students in Duffy's class estimated that staying clothed at fashionable cost their parents more than $1,000 a year. High-end sneakers cost $150 while a short-sleeve T-shirt at Abercrombie & Fitch can cost $39.50.

JFK does not have a dress code, and none has been proposed. That may be just as well for Duffy's students, who clearly value their individual fashion choices, despite the residual fallout.

But the advisory group discussions, which were originally prompted by a student's concern about name-brand cliques, may shift the clothing choices these students make even without school uniforms.

Toward the end of the period, Linden offered another possible solution, something she said she had read recently in a book.

It had nothing to do with school uniforms, whether khaki, pastel or plaid.

She said, "If you make it seem that what you are wearing is right, that it is just awesome, then people will accept it. But if you just shrink back, people will say, 'that's stupid.'"

Hampshire Gazette, Northampton, MA. Spring 2000.

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Town _____

Town _____

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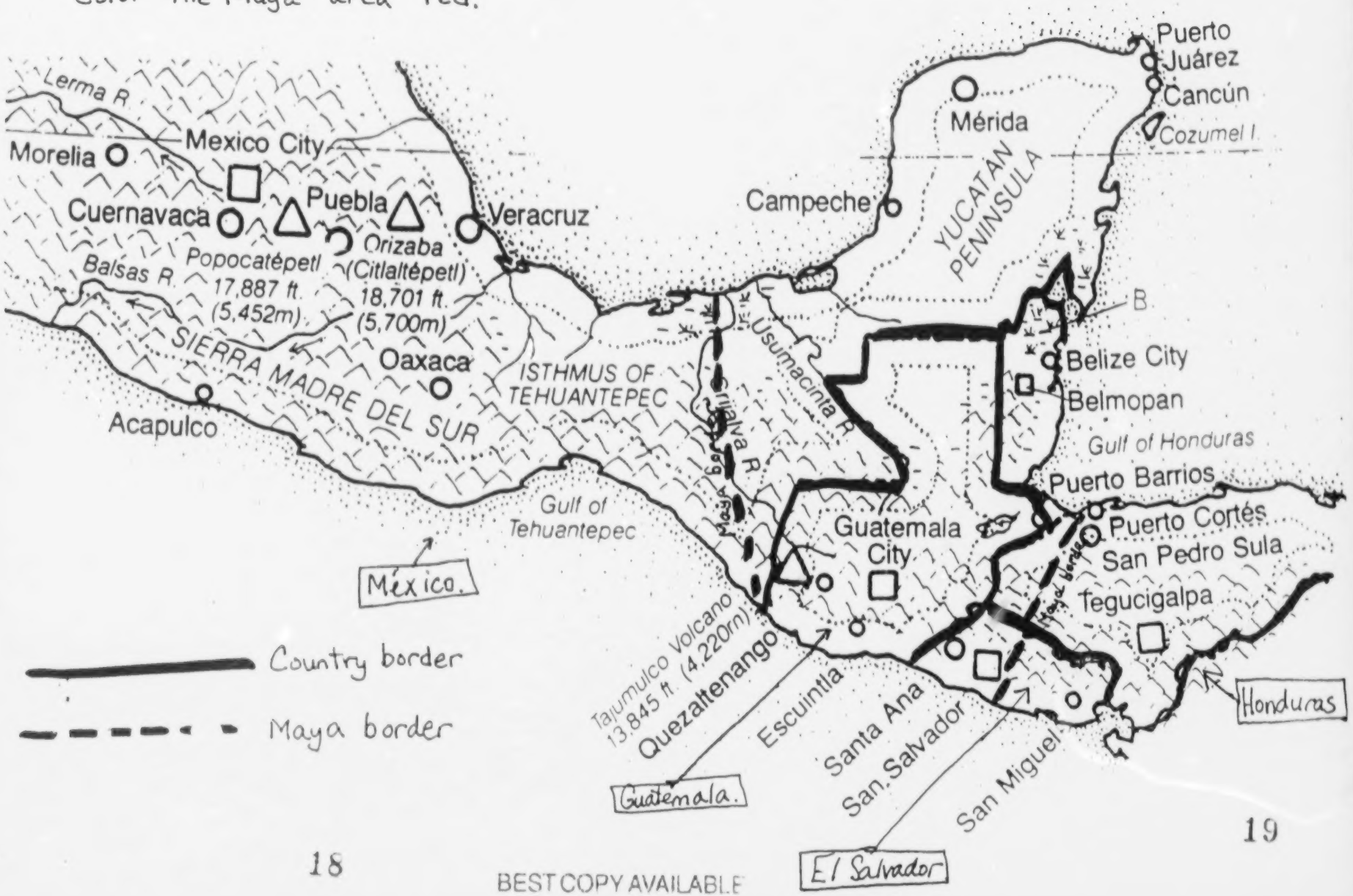
Color México orange.
Color Guatemala yellow.
Color the Maya area red.



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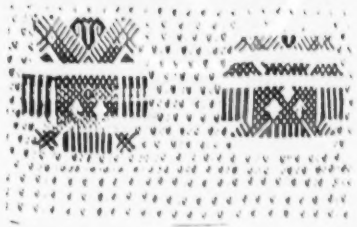

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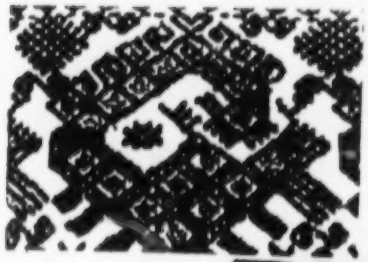

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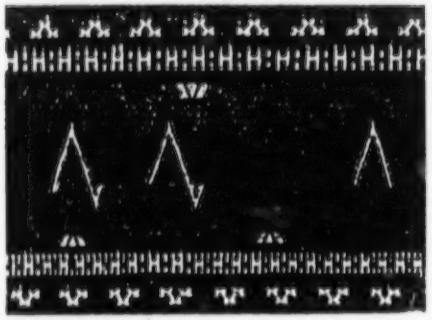

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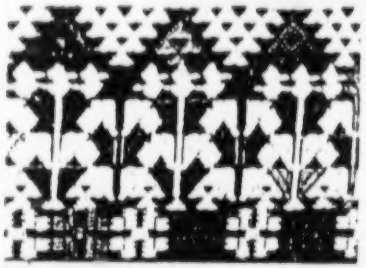


6.

7.

First write the number of the picture next to the description. Then try to guess what the picture means and write that letter next to the description.

monkey _____ _____

hummingbird on tobacco plant _____ _____

snake _____ _____

dead turkey _____ _____

toad _____ _____

tiger _____ _____

two-headed eagle _____ _____

A. Represents wealth and is an offering to the bride's parents on the wedding day.

B. Represents the legend of a man transformed into a bird while courting the moon.

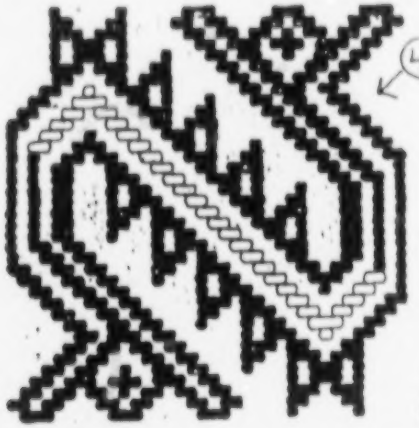
C. Represents something on the earth but also close to the "Underworld".

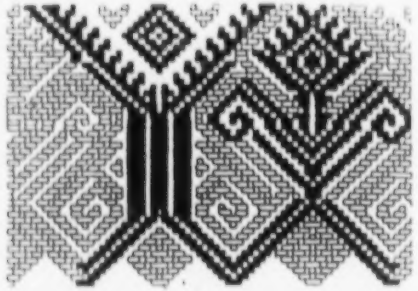
D. Represents a God who can look ahead and back at the same time. He can also see good and bad, and the earth and sky.

E. Represents courage in war.

F. Represents lack of order and chaos.

G. Represents rain and fertility.





Write the number of the picture next to the description.

the cosmos and four directions _____

cultivated earth ready for planting _____

snake, plants and cosmos _____

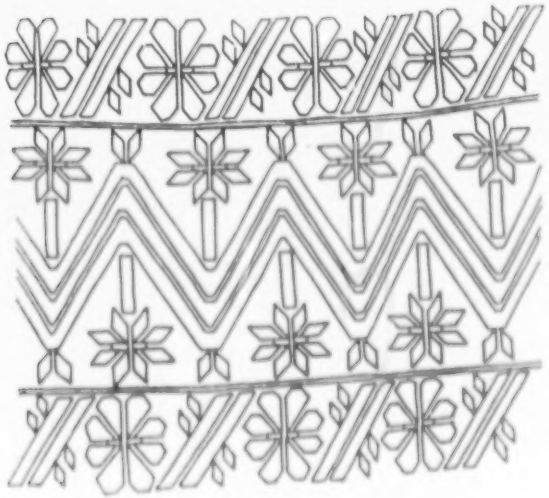
monkey _____

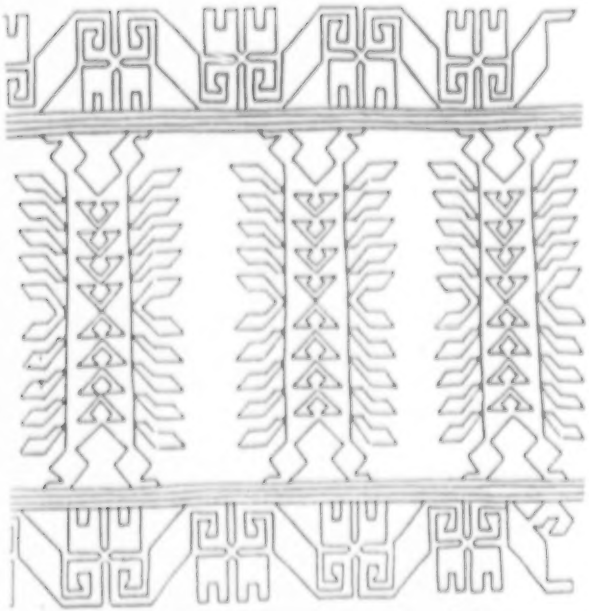
feathered serpeant (an important God) _____

father and mother with cornstalk arms _____

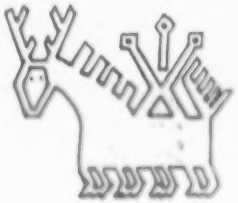
toads _____

about what designs you recognize.



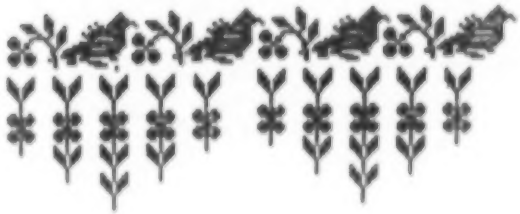


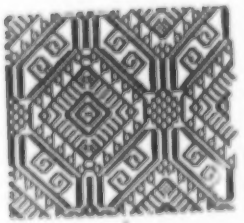
II. After you color the 3 animals below, write in what they are!



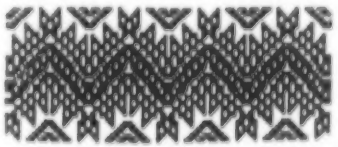
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

III. Write what symbols you recognize in the designs below.





1. _____ 2. _____



3. _____ 4. _____

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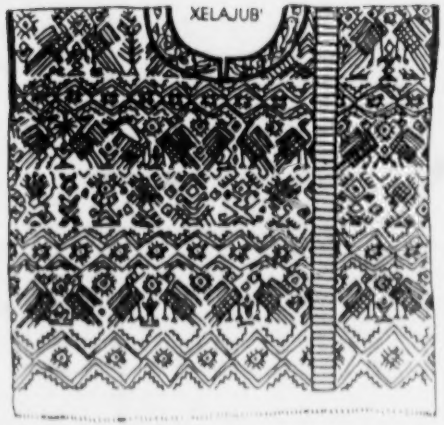
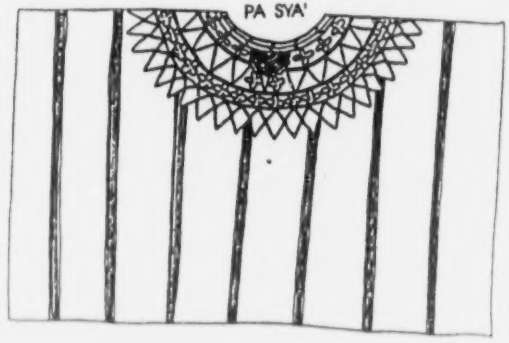
write in designs you recognize next to the huipil.

XELAJUB'

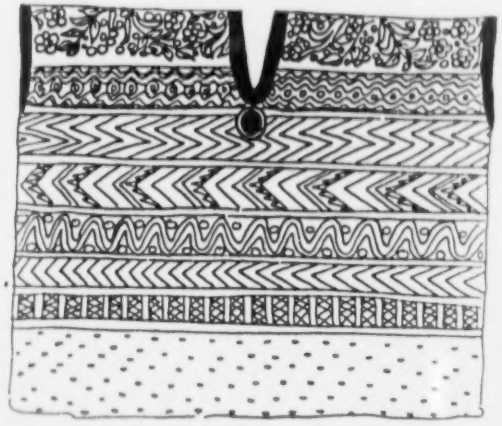


PA SYA'

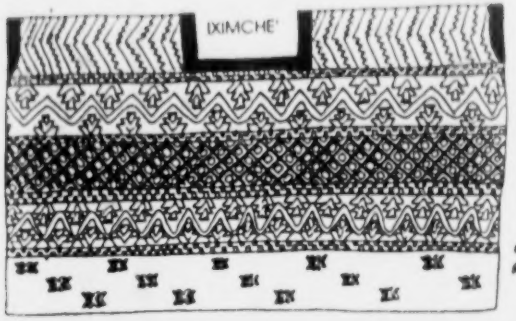


CHI XOT

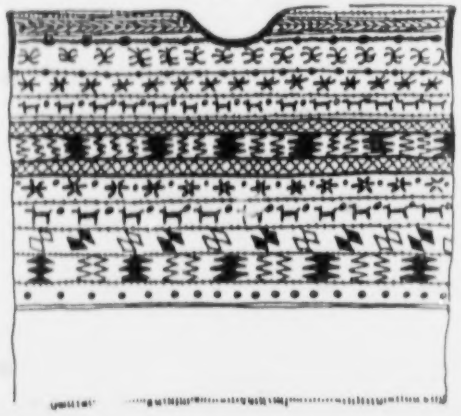
PA MEQ'ÁN YA'



IXIMCHE'



SAN LUCAS TOUMÁN



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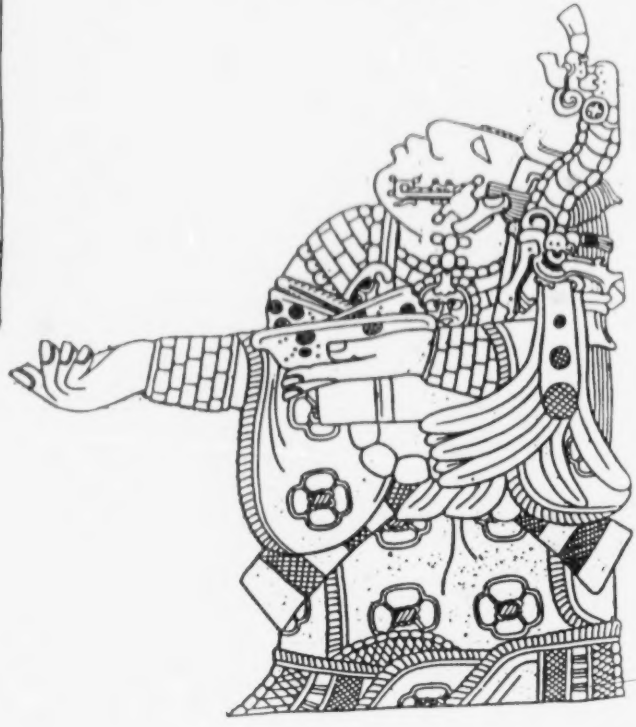

Lintels from 709 A.D. in Yaxchilán showing Lady Xoc in bloodletting rituals. Symbols below are from her garments.

The four petaled flower represents the earth monster who disgorges dead souls. The braided knot is a glyph for royalty.

The diamond shape represents four quarters of the world moving through time.

The toad represents rain + fertility.

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28 Goddess Ixchel at her

Late Classic Maya woman at

Name: _____

I. Create your own row for a "huipil" below. Use at least three traditional symbols you have seen on other worksheets. Keep it simple and remember the pattern should repeat. Color it when you are finished.

II. Draw the individual symbols that you used above and then label them and tell what they stand for.

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Video "Central America Close Up, Guatemala and El Salvador"

Before watching the video:

Find Santiago Chimaltenango on a large Guatemalan Map.

What do you think are typical features of a Guatemalan village? And a Guatemalan house?

Santiago Chimaltenango has only one phone. What do you think about this? When/why do phones become a necessity? How would your life be different if there were only one phone in your town?

After watching the video:

Did anything in the video surprise you?

What do you have questions about from the video?

Describe the traditional clothing for women in Chimaltenango. Do you like it?

What were some of the traditions in Santiago Chimaltenango that you noticed?

What changes came about because of a new street and electricity?

Given the problem of not having enough land, what do you think is the solution for Nati and her family? What are her options?